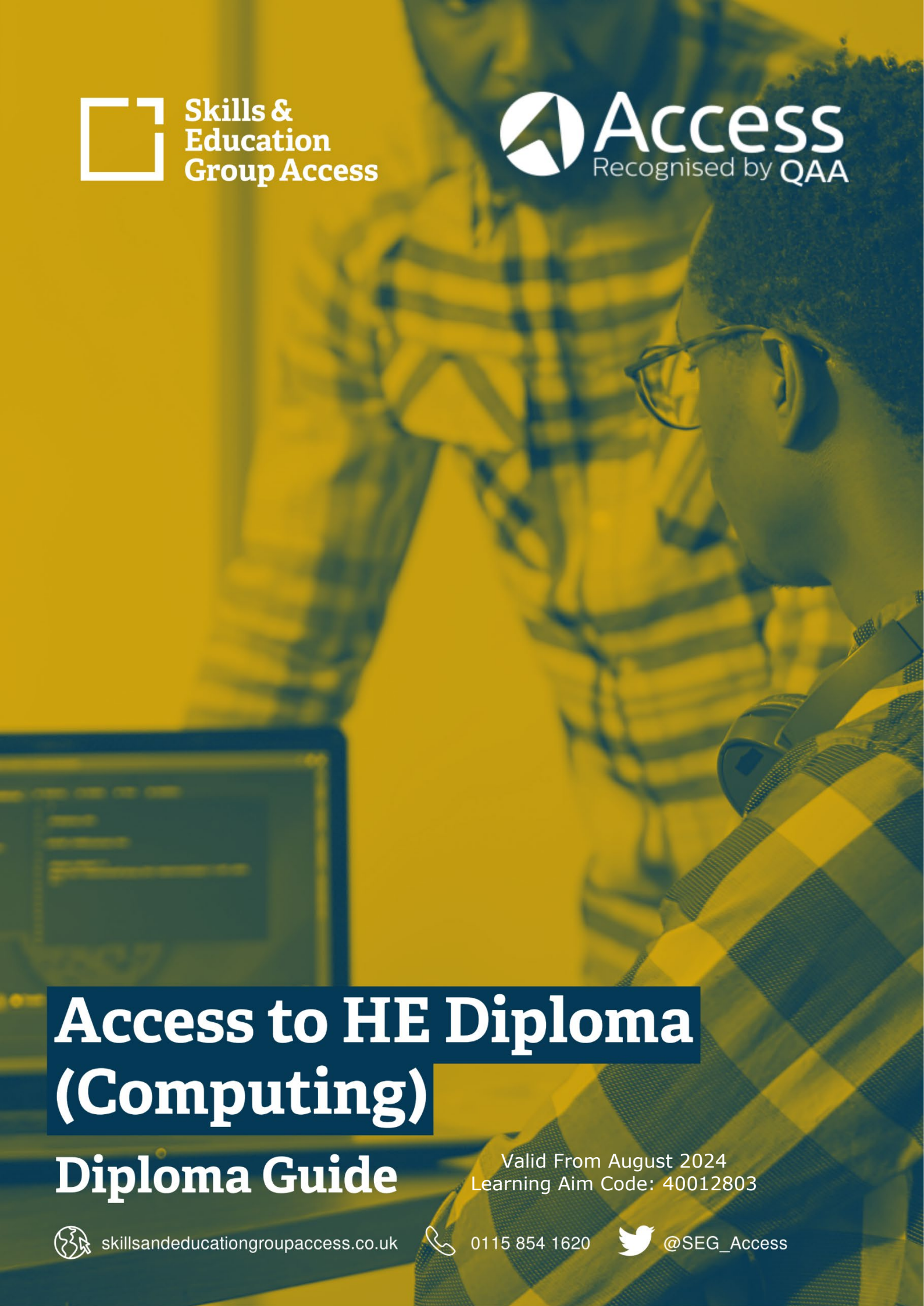

Skills & Education Group Access

Access Recognised by QAA

Access to HE Diploma (Computing)

Diploma Guide

Valid From August 2024
Learning Aim Code: 40012803

skillsandeducationgroupaccess.co.uk
0115 854 1620
@SEG_Access

Table of Contents

Access to HE Diploma Background and Aims

The Access to Higher Education Diploma is a full Level 3 UK qualification. It is regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) which licenses Access Validating Agencies (AVAs) to accredit and award the Access to Higher Education Diploma in the UK.

Access to Higher Education Diplomas enable students to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to progress to higher education. They are key to widening participation from groups traditionally underrepresented at higher education institutions and are therefore aimed particularly, though not exclusively, at adults without traditional qualifications.

The aims of the Access to HE Diploma are to:

- prepare students who are returning to education for progression to Higher Education, further training in a related vocational or occupational area
- help students develop the skills and knowledge they need to achieve on their chosen HE course or career pathway
- familiarise students with the teaching and learning methodologies and assessment strategies found in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
- help students to gain confidence in their abilities, to review and monitor their own progress and to become independent students
- develop students' research, planning, analytical and evaluation skills
- enable students to make informed choices about future progression routes

Diploma development

Skills and Education Group Access has worked with curriculum specialists and higher education colleagues to develop the Access to HE Diploma (Computing). Every Diploma is validated by the AVA through a robust and rigorous peer panel process which then recommends approval to the AVA's Access to HE Committee. By taking into consideration the views of Further and Higher Education practitioners, the AVA ensures that the Diploma meets all QAA requirements and that it enables students to complete a planned, balanced and coherent programme of study, through which they have been able to acquire a subject knowledge and develop academic skills which are relevant to the intended progression route(s).

LC 50a: This QAA recognised Access to HE Diploma is validated for delivery within the UK by a provider with a main base in the UK (including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) only.

LC 50c: Only students with a UK address (including BFO) can be registered for an Access to HE Diploma

Diploma and Credit Specification

The QAA Diploma and Credit Specification states that the Access to HE Diploma is a:
unitised qualification, based on units of assessment which are structured in accordance with the Access to HE unit specification

- credit-based qualification, operated in accordance with the terms of the Access to HE credit specification

- graded qualification, as determined by the Access to HE Grading Scheme.

About this qualification

AVA Diploma Access to HE Diploma	Main Classification (Sector Subject Area)	Sub-Classification
(Computing)	6 - Information and Communication Technology	6.1 - ICT for Users

This Diploma specification is valid from: 01/08/2024
Diploma revalidation date: 31/07/2026

The Access to HE Diploma (Computing) aims to provide students with a foundation in computing principles and practices, preparing them for Higher Education in the IT and computing sectors. This diploma develops essential knowledge, subject-specific skills, and transferable skills, enabling students to become independent learners and potential IT and Computing professionals. Through diverse units and practical experiences, students gain a thorough understanding of computer systems, programming, and emerging technologies.

A. Key Knowledge:

1. Computing Fundamentals:
- Understanding of components of computer systems, database development, and business information technology.
- Knowledge of cyber security fundamentals, cyber forensics, security legislation, and encryption concepts.
- Exploration of artificial intelligence, deep learning, and machine learning.

2. Mathematical and Analytical Skills:
- Proficiency in pure maths, algebra, calculus, and trigonometry.
- Skills in further differentiation, integration, and vectors and matrices.
- Competence in data handling and computational methods.

3. Technical Skills:
- Proficiency in programming constructs, software development, and systems analysis.
- Understanding of computer architecture and networks.
- Skills in web page design and production, spreadsheet modelling, and word processing.

B. Subject-Specific Skills:
1. IT and Cyber Security:
- Competence in IT applications within organizations.

- Expertise in encryption, security concepts, and cyber forensics.
- Understanding of the safe and ethical use of generative artificial intelligence.

2. Software and System Development:
- Skills in project development, software development, and systems analysis.
- Proficiency in database development and emerging technologies.

C. Transferable Skills:

1. Research and Analytical Skills:
- Enhanced research skills and ability to handle and analyse data.
- Understanding of opportunities in higher education and relevant academic writing skills.
- Development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

2. Communication and Presentation:
- Development of effective communication and presentation skills.
- Experience in group processes and collaboration within team settings.
- Enhanced reading and note-making abilities.

3. Technical Proficiency:
- Competence in using information and communication technology tools.
- Skills in word processing and spreadsheet modelling.

Intended Progression Routes

LC 61a and 61b: Access to HE Diplomas are intended to provide a preparation for study in UK higher education, but the award of a Diploma does not provide guaranteed entry to UK higher education programmes.

The following progression routes were agreed at the point of validation as being appropriate choices for students who achieve the Access to HE Diploma (Computing), subject to the course entry requirements and application process.

- Computer Science
- Computer Programming
- ICT
- Networking
- Education
- Computer Software Design
- Cyber Security
- Website Design
- Digital Media

It is essential that providers delivering this Diploma consult receiving HEIs themselves to ensure that suitable and relevant progression opportunities are sound. Evidence of HEI consultation and progression possibilities will be identified in the provider's Programme Submission Document.

Access to HE Diploma provider assessment strategy advice

QAA states that the Access to HE Diploma provides *'HE progression opportunities for adults who, because of social, educational or individual circumstances may have achieved few, if any, prior qualifications'. They also state that, 'Students who are awarded the Diploma will have completed a planned, balanced and coherent programme of study, through which they have been able to acquire subject knowledge and develop academic skills which are relevant to the intended progression route(s)'.* Therefore all approved providers need to develop diploma assessment strategies which outline what assessment activities the students will undertake, how they will be used and why they have been chosen in order to achieve the learning aims:

1. **What** is the the aim of the diploma assessment strategy?
2. **How** will it be achieved?
3. **Why** has this approach been chosen?

Assessment design:
Access to HE Diplomas should be assessed using innovative and contemporaneous methods, tailored to prepare students studying at Level 3 for study at Higher Education. Assessment design should be holistic, ensuring students can demonstrate attained knowledge, skills and behaviours in and across units and assessments should reflect those likely to be encountered on Higher Education courses in the same field of study. Specific assessment guidance should be provided for each unit to ensure consistency and fairness across all student achievements.

In addition, providers must ensure that assessment methods are chosen which afford students opportunities to demonstrate the requirements of the three Grading Standards; Knowledge and Understanding, Subject Specific Skills and Transferable Skills.

Assessment design should comply with the requirements of the QAA Grading Scheme (2024) and also be aligned to the principles of assessment: Validity, Authenticity, Reliability, Currency and Sufficiency (VARCS).

Assessment guidance specific to this diploma:
Further to the guidance above, it would be useful for tutors to consider the merits of the following assessment methods too:

- Time constrained assignments
- Open book examinations
- Activities similar to a Viva Voce
- Project work
- Group project work – crafted so that all participants can be individually assessed
- Creating design documents
- Case studies contextualised to industry

LC 50g: Tutor/Assessor qualifications and experience specifically required for delivery and assessment of this diploma:
Generally, and as a minimum, it is expected that provider staff teaching on the Diploma have the required professional competence and skills necessary for the mode(s) of delivery to be used, and the level of subject expertise necessary to teach and assess the units available on the Diploma.

Rules of Combination

Where options are available within a single set of rules of combination, which allow alternative requirements for the achievement of a named Diploma, the alternatives permitted by the options are consistent, in terms of academic challenge and demand, and will require equivalent standards for achievement, whenever and wherever it is delivered.

Access to HE Diploma (Computing)	
Credit Value of the Diploma:	**60**
Students must achieve all the units within the Diploma.	
All Diplomas are 60 credits, irrespective of the place, subject or mode of study. Of the 60 credits 45 must be from graded units concerned with academic subject content, with the remaining 15 credits to be achieved from ungraded units. In addition, all students must study a minimum of **ten 3 credit units** and at least **one 9 or 6 credit unit**, which may or may not be graded.	
Students can achieve up to a maximum of 30 credits at Level 3 through credit transfer and the award of credit through the recognition of prior learning.	
Students undertaking any Access to HE Diploma, whatever their mode of study, must be: **a)** registered and certificated for units to a maximum value of 60 credits **b)** registered for units to the value of 60 credits no later than 84 days from the start date of their Access to HE course, or before the student makes a formal application to a higher education course through UCAS or any other application process, whichever date occurs first.	

Appendix 1 - Units of Assessment – Access to HE Diploma (Computing)

For every unit included in the table, further information is included in the Unit Specifications, including learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

Grading Standards (Applied to all graded units)

1	**Knowledge and Understanding of the Subject**	**KU**
2	**Subject Specific Skills**	**SS**
3	**Transferable Skills**	**TS**

There are no mandatory units. Students must study a minimum of TEN, 3 credit units and at least ONE 6 or 9 credit unit up to a maximum of 30 credits.

Optional Units

Graded Units. Choose 45 credits from:

Unit Title	New Unit ID	New National Code	Level	CV
Business Information Technology	YHS878	CN1/3/AA/01G	Three	6
Components of Computer Systems	YHS879	CN1/3/AA/02G	Three	6
Cyber Security Fundamentals	YHT090	CK8/3/AA/03G	Three	3
Cyber Forensics, Security and Legislation	YHT091	CK8/3/AA/04G	Three	3
Database Development	YHS882	CP2/3/AA/01G	Three	6
Encryption and Security Concepts	YHS884	CN3/3/AA/01G	Three	6
Programming Constructs	YHS887	CK3/3/AA/01G	Three	6
Project Development	YHT116	CJ1/3/AA/02G	Three	6
Software Development	YHS888	CL4/3/AA/01G	Three	6
Spreadsheet Modelling	YHS889	CP3/3/AA/01G	Three	6
Systems Analysis	YHS890	CL6/3/AA/01G	Three	6
Pure Maths	YHT089	RB1/3/AA/03G	Three	3
Computational Methods	YHS880	RB8/3/AA/01G	Three	3
Computer Architecture	YHS881	CJ3/3/AA/01G	Three	3
Emerging Technologies	YHS883	CJ1/3/AA/01G	Three	3
IT in Organisations	YHS885	CY2/3/AA/01G	Three	3
Networks	YHS886	CM4/3/AA/01G	Three	3
Web Page Design and Production	YHS891	CK8/3/AA/02G	Three	3
Algebra and Functions	YHS975	RB3/3/AA/01G	Three	3
Calculus	YHS976	RB5/3/AA/01G	Three	3
Data Handling	YHS977	RB7/3/AA/05G	Three	3
Further Differentiation	YHS980	RB5/3/AA/02G	Three	3
Further Integration	YHS981	RB1/3/AA/01G	Three	3
Vectors and Matrices	YHS984	RB1/3/AA/02G	Three	3

Artificial Intelligence, Deep and Machine Learning	YHT086	CK5/3/AA/03G	Three	3
Further Trigonometry	YHS982	RB4/3/AA/01G	Three	3

Ungraded Units. Choose 15 credits from:

Unit Title	New Unit ID	New National Code	Level	CV
Communication Skills	YHT054	KA1/3/AA/01U	Three	6
The Safe and Ethical Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence	YHT073	CK5/3/AA/01U	Three	3
Higher Education Toolkit	YHT057	HC7/3/AA/10U	Three	6
Group Processes	YHT056	HB1/3/AA/01U	Three	3
Presentation Skills	YHT063	HC7/3/AA/09U	Three	3
Research Skills	YHT065	HC7/3/AA/08U	Three	3
Researching and Understanding Opportunities in Higher Education	YHT067	HC7/3/AA/04U	Three	3
Use of Information and Communication Technology	YHT068	CN1/3/AA/01U	Three	3
Word Processing	YHT069	CQ1/3/AA/01U	Three	3
Academic Writing Skills	YHT071	HC7/3/AA/01U	Three	3
Reading and Note Making	YHT064	HC7/3/AA/02U	Three	3
Artificial Intelligence, Deep and Machine Learning	YHT087	CK5/3/AA/02U	Three	3

Inclusion and Exclusion rules of combination

Barred Unit 1	National Code	CV	Barred Unit 2	National Code	CV
Higher Education Toolkit	HC7/3/AA/10U	6	Presentation Skills	HC7/3/AA/09U	3
Artificial Intelligence, Deep and Machine Learning	CK5/3/AA/03G	3	Artificial Intelligence, Deep and Machine Learning	CK5/3/AA/02U	3